

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 LONDON 02347 092116Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
TRSE-00 /058 W
-----100209Z 115140 /63

R 091751Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0490
INFO AMCONSUL EDINBURGH
AMCONSUL BELFAST

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LONDON 2347

E O 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PDEV, UK
SUBJECT: DEVOLUTION: SCOTTISH POLL AND GOVERNMENT PROBLEMS

REF: A) LONDON 17881 (76) B) LONDN 2048
C) LONDON 2045

SUMMARY: A RECENT ORC POLL IN SCOTLAND INDICATES THAT AT
LEAST 66 PERCENT OF SCOTS WOULD ENDORSE THE GOVT'S
DEVOLUTION PLANS IN A REFERENDUM. THIS AND OTHER POLL
RESULTS REFLECT LITTLE CHANGE IN SCOTTISH ATTITUDES TO-
WARD DEVEOLUTION SINCE THE MAJOR OCTOBER 1976 POLL (REF.
A). THE OUTLINR FOR THE DEVOLUTION BILL IN PARLIAMENT,
MEANWHILE, REMAINS FUUID, AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS HAVE NOT
BEEN FAVORABLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. THE SCOTSMAN FEB 9 PUBLISHED THE RESULTS OF A
FEB 5-6 POLL OF 1006 SCOTTISH VOTERS IN WHICH TYE
WERE ASKED TO RESPOND TO THE QUESTION THE GOVERNMENT HAS
PROPOSED FOR THE DEVEOLUTION REFERENDA (REF B). NOT
SURPRISNGLY , 66 PERCENT RESPONDED AFFIRMATIVELY, ENDOR-
SING THE BILL; 21 PERCENT REPLIED NEGATIVELY: AND THE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 LONDON 02347 092116Z

BALANCE, 13 PERCENT, EXPRESSED NO PREFERENCE. WHEN THE
UNDECIDED RESPONDENTS ARE DIVIDED EVENLY, THE RESULTS ARE
73 TO 28 PERCENT IN FAVOR; AND WHEN OMITTED, THEY ARE 77
TO 23 PERCENT. THIS COMPARES WITH A PRO/CON/ UNDECIDED
BREAKDOWN OF 65/16/17 PERCENT RECORDED IN OCTOBER (REF.
A), THUS INDICATING A SLIGHT INCREASE IN OPPOSITION TO
THE DEVOLUTION BILL. ASKED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN SEVERAL

DEVOLUTION OPTIONS, AS IN THE PREVIOUS POLLS, ESPONDENTS REVEALED ONLY ONE STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE: THE PERCENTAGE FAVORING A DEVOLVED ASSEMBLY WITH SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER ECONOMIC POWERS DECREASED FROM 27 TO 23 PERCENT.

2. WHILE THE ORC POLL RESULTS WERE FAVORABLE FOR DEVOLUTION AND THE GOVERNMENT, THE FUTURE OF THE BILL IN PARLIAMENT REMAINS UNCERTAIN. AND OTHER INDICATIONS HAVE NOT BEEN FAVORABLE. THE CALCULUS OF A WINNING VOTE ON A TIMETABLE MOTION, A SINE QUA NON FOR PASAGE, CONTINUES TO BE DIFFICULT (REF B). THE TIMES RECENTLY PUBLISHED A LIST OF 35 LABOR MPS IT BELIEVES ARE LIKELY TO ABSTAIN ON OR VOTE AGAINST SUCH A MOTION. WITH THAT NUMBER OF DEFECTORS -- AND OUR REVIEW OF THE LIST SHOWS ONLY THREE MPS WE WOULD CONSIDER LIKELY TO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT IN THE CRUNCH-- THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT CARRY A TIMETABLE MOTION IN THE FACE OF SOLID CONSERVATIVE, LIBERAL AND ULSTER UNINIST OPPOSITION. THE TIMES LISTING, OF COURSE, IS NOT CONCLUSIVE.

3. ADDING TO THE GOVERNMENT'S PROBLEMS IS THE APPARENT HARDENING OF LABOR BACKBENCH RESISTANCE TO DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. SINCE REF. C, ANTI-DEVOLUTIONIST OPPONENTS OF DIRECT ELECTIONS HAVE PUBLICLY SUGGESTED THAT THEIR VOTE ON DEVOLUTION MIGHT BE CONTINGENT ON THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION ON DIRECT ELECTIONS, MAKING EXPLICIT THE THREAT WHICH PREVIOUSLY WAS ONLY IMPLIED.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 LONDON 02347 092116Z

4. PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN ALSO SEEMED TO SOUR BACKBENCH ATTITUDES. LATE LAST WEEK, IN WHAT WAS APPARENTLY DESIGNED TO BE A SHOW OF AUTHORITY AND RESOLUTION, HE SACKED THREE PARLIAMENTARY PRIVATE SECRETARIES WHO HAD DEFIED THE GOVERNMENT WHIP ON A MINOR BILL. THIS WAS WIDELY PERCEIVED AS AN ACT OF BRAVADO, REVEALING WEAKNESS AND UNCERTAINTY. ANOTHER SYMPTON OF WANING LABOR COHESION AND WILL OCCURRED FEB 7 WHE, THROUGH A MIX-UP IN PAIRING ARRANGEMENTS, THE GOVERNMENT LOST, BY A SINGLE VOTE, A SECOND READING VOTE ON A RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT BILL TO INCREASE EMPLOYER REDUNDANCY CONTRIBUTIONS. BOTH CALLAGHAN AND CHANCELLOR HEALEY REPORTEDLY FOUND THEMSELVES AMONG THOSE WHO HAD INCORRECTLY THOUGHT THEMSELVES PARIED.

5. CONCURRENTLY, SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY (SNP) SPOKESMEN ANNOUNCED THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT FAILED TO BRING FORWARD A TIMETABLE MOTION OR SUCH A MOTION DID NOT PASS, THAT

PARTY WOULD DO ALL IN ITS POWER TO PRECIPITATE A GENERAL ELECTION. ITS 11 VOTES CAN BE CRUCIAL TO THE GOVERNMENT. HERETOFORE, THE SNP HAS TACITLY SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT IN CLOSE AND CRITICAL SITUATIONS, LARGELY BECAUSE IT WAS UNCERTAIN ABOUT ITS OWN ELECTORAL PROSPECTS AND REALIZED THAT A CONSERVATIVE GOVT WOULD PROBABLY NOT OFFER MEANINGFUL DEVOLUTION. IF THE DEVOLUTION BILL SHOULD DIE, THE SCOTTISH OUTLOOK WOULD CHANGE DRAMATICALLY. THE BACKLASH IN SCOTLAND WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY GIVE THE NATIONALISS SWEEPING ELECTORAL GAINS, PERHAPS EVEN THE MAJORITY OF SCOTLAND'S SEATS THE SNP CLAIMS WOULD CONSTITUTE A MANDATE FOR INDEPENDENCE.

6. ALTHOUGH THE ORC POLL RESULTS NO DOUBT PROVIDED FLEETING SATISFACTION FOR THE GOVERNMENT, ITS MAJOR PRE-OCCUPATION IS WITH ITS OWN BACKBENCHES. IN THAT CONTEXT THE SNP'S NEW POSTURE MAY PROVE HELPFUL, EASING THE TASK LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 LONDON 02347 092116Z

OF BRINGING DISENTING BACKBENCHERS INTO LINE. BUT THE GENERAL MALAISE AND UNCERTAINTIES REMAIN, AT LEAST THROUGH THE REFERENDUM DEBATE WHICH BEGINS FEB 10. ARMSTRONG

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REFORM, PUBLIC OPINION POLLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 09-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977LONDON02347
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: CONFIDENTIAL, 020902 FMACHAK 25X6
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D770047-0170
Format: TEL
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197702102/ddudyaaf.tel
Line Count: 143
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: df4f1fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 LONDON 17881, 77 LONDON 2048
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3234386
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 20010601
Subject: DEVOLUTION: SCOTTISH POLL AND GOVERNMENT PROBLEMS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PDEV, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/df4f1fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009